The Random Jottings of Donald Jay from Nelson in Lancashire.

The hamlet of Stocks-in-Bowland had vanished beneath the calm waters of the Stocks Reservoir, its buildings and memories submerged in the depths. But some believed that the spirit of the village still lingered, trapped between the worlds of the living and the dead.

As twilight fell upon the valley, an eerie mist would rise from the surface of the reservoir. Whispers carried on the wind, the echoes of long-forgotten conversations and laughter. The apparitions of villagers, frozen in time, would materialize at the water's edge, their spectral forms barely visible in the fading light.

Among the lost souls of Stocks-in-Bowland, there was one whose presence was particularly unsettling. The spirit of a young girl named Emily, who had perished tragically during the village's abandonment, was said to wander the reservoir's shores. She was known for her ethereal beauty, her flowing white gown billowing in the wind as she roamed the land that was once her home.

Those who dared venture near the reservoir at night would often hear the haunting melody of a music box carried on the breeze. It was said to be Emily's cherished possession, the last gift from her mother before her untimely demise. The music box would play a mournful tune, evoking both sadness and longing in those who listened.

Locals shared tales of encountering Emily's ghostly presence, recounting how she would appear before them, her eyes filled with a silent plea. Some claimed that she would reach out, as if seeking solace or companionship in the land of the living. But as soon as one approached, she would vanish into the mist, leaving behind only an inexplicable sense of loss and melancholy.

Superstitious fishermen, casting their lines into the reservoir's depths, whispered of strange occurrences. They spoke of their lines being tugged by unseen hands, of spectral figures rising from the water, and of mysterious ripples forming on the surface as if someone invisible had passed through.

Visitors to the area often reported a heavy atmosphere, as if an unseen presence watched their every move. Some would even feel a soft touch on their shoulders or a cold breath on their necks, as if Emily's ghostly form brushed against them in her eternal search for solace.

Despite the ghostly tales, Stocks Reservoir remained a popular destination for outdoor enthusiasts. Fishermen continued to cast their lines, hikers explored the surrounding hills, and cyclists pedaled along the reservoir's winding trails. The village may have vanished, but its spirit endured, intertwining with the natural beauty of the landscape.

To this day, those who visit Stocks-in-Bowland and gaze out across the tranquil reservoir may catch a glimpse of the past. They may hear the faint strains of a music box or feel a chilling breeze whispering ancient secrets. The spirit of Emily and the lost villagers of Stocks-in-Bowland wander, forever bound to the waters that claimed their home, reminding the living that even in the depths of memory, the echoes of the past can still be heard.

By Donald Jay